



CONNECTICUT EMPLOYEES UNION INDEPENDENT

PO Box 1268
Middletown, CT 06457

Testimony by Carl Chisem, President Connecticut
Employees Union Independent, SEIU Local 511
**H.B. 5673 AN ACT CONCERNING THE REFORMATION OF CERTAIN TAXES
AND TAX EQUITY**
Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee Public Hearing February 27, 2023

Good afternoon Senator Fonfara, Representative Horn and members of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee. My name is Carl Chisem and I am President of the Connecticut Employees Union Independent, SEIU Local 511 and a member of Recovery For All, a statewide coalition of faith, community, and labor organizations united to eliminate systemic inequalities and rebuild a better Connecticut. Our union represents over 6,000 active and retired blue collar maintenance and service workers. Our members provide valuable services within our state facilities and on our state roads. They cook, clean, repair, maintain and deliver in Connecticut's State buildings, hospitals, college campuses, airports, roads, bridges and parks. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of H.B. 5673. An Act Concerning The Reformation Of Certain Taxes And Tax Equity.

As the wealthiest state in the country, Connecticut should be a shining example for the nation where every family has what we need to live a good life. But instead we have a state where hundreds of thousands of working people are struggling to raise families. Connecticut leads in income inequality, leaving the poorest residents to deal with education gaps, health disparities, unattainable home ownership and other hardships. Years of austerity and disinvestment have worsened inequities and hampered economic growth in both the private and public sectors.

Across Connecticut, regardless of our race, gender, income level or town in which we live, we have all pulled together to navigate the pandemic and its ensuing financial devastation. Now, as the virus recedes and with our rainy day funds maxed out, it's time to provide relief to our most vulnerable residents. It needs to be more meaningful than a one-time, post-election year tax cut. We must rebuild our public services - not just to deliver much needed immediate assistance, but to strengthen our communities for the long-term by eliminating the disparities that create inequality. No one in Connecticut, the wealthiest state in the wealthiest country, should be forced to live with the untenable levels of stress that are created when one can only focus on survival.

The 2014 state tax incidence analysis shows that the bottom 50% of Connecticut taxpayers contribute 23.6% of their income, whereas those in the top 1% contribute a mere 7.5%. That top 1% has continued to do very well since 2014. Since the start of the pandemic, Connecticut's 12 billionaires seized \$15 billion in additional wealth – adding on average \$1 billion each – while hundreds of thousands of working people, especially working people of color, saw their lives upended.

We have an unprecedented opportunity – and the current resources – to create a state where everyone has good healthcare to lead healthy lives, high quality childcare and schools for their children, a good job to support their families, and a safe place to call home. I urge the Committee to have the courage to make the right choice and pass House Bill 5673.